



# WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

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WINDHAM, VERMONT

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2006

## Commission discusses town plan with residents

by Mary McCoy

On November 10, 2005, the Windham Planning Commission conducted a public presentation related to the current draft of our town plan. More than 60 people attended the meeting, held at the Windham Elementary School.

Bob Kehoe, chair of the commission, explained the purpose of the plan. Unlike previous town plans that focused only on maintaining Windham's natural resources, the current plan is more comprehensive, addressing many aspects of life in Windham.

Jeff Nugent, from the Windham Regional Commission, offered information about zoning regulations, explaining that many towns require that all lots be a certain size with the intention of protecting open spaces. However, such regulations sometimes have unintended results, such as breaking up large corridors used by wildlife to access various forests.

Another approach may be to write regulations that limit lot sizes in some areas to encourage clusters of houses and that allow larger lots in other areas to promote open spaces. Ultimately, Jeff noted, typography and the market place determine as much or more about how land is used than zoning regulations. He pointed out that some towns without any zoning requirements have maintained what many think of as best for Vermont – a village area with extensive rural countryside – while other towns that have zoning laws to accomplish this ideal have not succeeded.

Windham has one of the largest undeveloped areas in the region – the Stiles Brook area. Also, the lands along our eastern and western town lines are undeveloped. We have the largest amount of undeveloped land in the county that is not held by the government or trusts as conservation areas. Another way Windham is unusual is our lack of a large village cluster. Nor do we have numerous homes on private drives. Unlike other towns, nearly all of our homes are scattered along our roads.

After Jeff's presentation, Sue Fillion, also with the Windham Regional Commission, gave an overview of the draft of the Windham town plan. Sue meets regularly with our Planning Commission, providing administrative support, through the Vermont Municipal Planning Grant Program. She explained that the plan presents the current situation in Windham and provides a vision and goals for the future.

Once the plan is completed and approved, it will guide the Select Board and other town decision-making, and it will provide a standard for review at the regional and state levels. If the plan implies changes to zoning regulations, a public hearing is required. In the case of the proposed wind turbines, the plan tells the Public Service Board what is wanted in Windham; however, the PSB can override the plan if it determines that doing so is in the larger public good.

Sue reviewed the various aspects of life in Windham covered by the

plan. These include town government and facilities, community services, emergency planning, natural resources (land and water), energy (heating and electric sources, renewable energy, and conservation), resources (historic, outdoor recreational, and scenic), transportation (facilities, equipment, roads, bridges, etc.), housing, and land use (current and plans for future).

Each aspect is presented in the plan with an overview of the current situation, recommended policies, and recommended action steps. For example, the draft plan describes the four forested areas in Windham, sets policies for protecting and connecting them so that wildlife can move from one forest to another, and calls for a

*(continued on page 2)*

### WN&N takes position on possible wind farm

Circumstances related to the possible windmills on Glebe Mountain are complex with good reasons to support them and good reasons to oppose them. The *Windham News and Notes* team urges the residents of Windham to work together in a cooperative manner to find the best answer to this difficult question. It is the position of the *New and Notes* that we all move forward in a way that does not divide our town nor injure the sense of community that makes Windham such a wonderful place to live.



## Commission discusses town plan with residents

(continued from page 1)

survey of landowners in the wildlife corridors to assess their interest in conserving their property for this purpose.

Sue noted that the language in the plan as drafted is not compatible with the development of windmills, as such development goes against the intent of forest districts, raises concern about water quality, requires further analysis, challenges the preservation of Glebe Mountain as a scenic resource, and causes concern about the lighting required on the top of the windmills.

After Sue's presentation, Bob Kehoe stated that the draft language related to wind power development was based upon the previous plan, and since Windham has now been approached about locating the windmills here, there needs to be reconsideration of what the plan says.

The Planning Commission continues to meet on the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM at the Town Office. Bob encouraged people to attend, but added that the best way to give input is to provide written comments. The commission has yet to draft the section on housing, as well as two concluding chapters and the town plan maps. They also have yet to decide whether to recommend a change in the zoning regulation which currently sets lot sizes at one acre.






When the draft is complete, there will be a public hearing process. Revisions will be made, and the plan will be presented to the Select Board, which can approve it or return it to the Planning Commission for more work. The Select Board can ask for a vote of the town's people, or the town's people can call for a vote. However, the Select Board is not required to follow the results of a town decision.

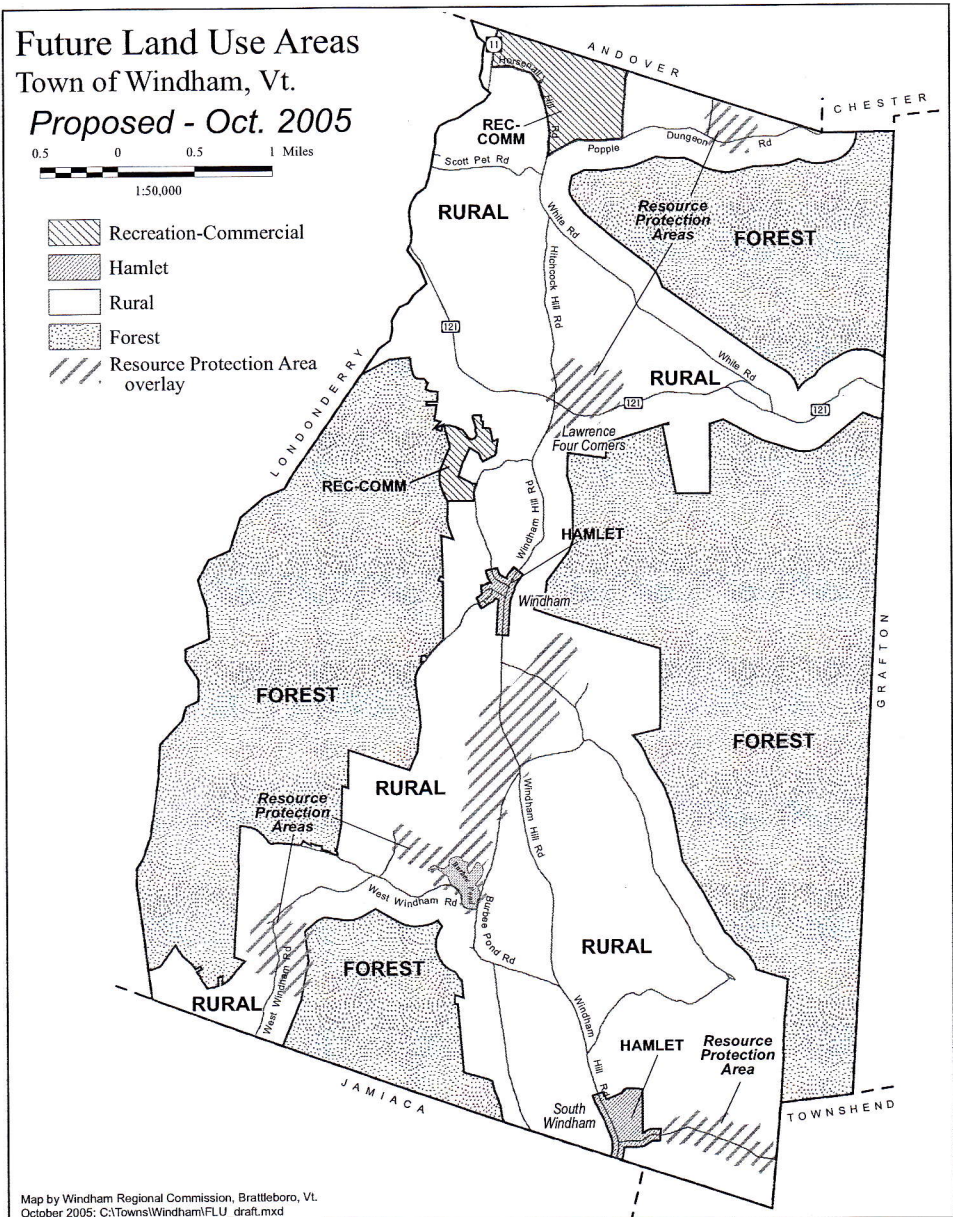
In addition to Bob Kehoe, members of the Planning Commission are Bob Bingham, Dawn Bower, Ernie

## Future Land Use Areas Town of Windham, Vt.

Proposed - Oct. 2005

0.5 0 0.5 1 Miles  
1:50,000

-  Recreation-Commercial
-  Hamlet
-  Rural
-  Forest
-  Resource Protection Area overlay



Friedli, and Michael Simonds. Charlie Peck, who lives on West Windham Road but in Jamaica, meets regularly with our Planning Commission to share his knowledge of the area and his expertise as a board member of the Windham Regional Commission.

## Fire Company hosts Halloween party

by Imme Maurath

The annual Halloween Party again turned out a big crowd despite almost a foot of snow falling right before the party. The hay ride went down White

Road, followed by the fire truck. Hot dogs were served first, so the games could begin.

The favorite game was who could eat the donut the fastest from a hanging string. I think we'll buy small donuts for the little kids next year, as they were starting to get tummy aches after the third game.

The Windham Fire Company would like to thank everyone for their generous donations during our annual fund drive. Happy Holidays!





## Meeting attendees discuss windmills

by Mary McCoy

At the end of the Planning Commission meeting of November 10, a discussion took place regarding the windmills. Below is a synopsis of the comments.

Charlie Peck – Wind generation requires sites over 2000 feet that run north and south. Such sites aren't prevalent in Vermont, yet Windham has three such ridges. Statements in Windham's draft plan are based on our current zoning regulations which don't allow industrial and commercial development on ridges. However, wind generation is exempt from zoning regulations.

Walter Woodruff – Windham thought this issue was Londonderry's concern. Now it is in our lap. The Select Board has sent a letter to the town lawyer with legal questions.

Howie Ires – People object to the environmental effect of windmills, but windmills are no worse than logging. If Catamount pays more taxes, it lowers taxes for the rest of us.

Pam Richard – We need to remember that having windmills on Glebe can negatively impact our taxes by driving away people with expensive homes.

Jim Scott – I want to know the hard data. What are the economic benefits and costs? We need expert analysis to determine what's in the best interest of the town.

Charlie Peck – We don't know yet what Catamount is proposing. Once we know, then lawyers, consultants and others can analyze the proposal and see how it will affect the town. The Windham Regional Commission knows people who are unbiased experts who can advise us and who aren't expensive. Also, we can look at the studies commissioned by Londonderry.

Walter Woodruff – Even if we all object, the windmills may still come. We need to be able to negotiate the best deal for Windham.

Ernie Friedli – To assure that we get the best deal, we need a skilled negotiator.

Margaret Dwyer – As we move forward, let's work together and not let this divide our town.

Walter Woodruff – We need to hear from all the town's people, including those who usually remain silent. This impacts all of us.

## Satellite TV to offer Vermont news

by Lydia Pope France

Good news – after a long battle which culminated in November 2004 with Congress and the FCC revising the law, it is now legal for satellite providers to offer local Vermont channels to residents of Windham and Bennington counties.

The day may be very near when we will be able to turn on our TVs and see what is happening here in our home state. It was announced in early November that Direct TV is about to act on the new legislation and add

local Vermont channels to the package in the month of January. Dish Network is promising to do the same sometime next year.

According to our contact in the Community Affairs Department of Vermont Public Television, once the change is made the channels should be showing up automatically for anyone who currently subscribes to a local package. Direct TV has announced that they will be added at no extra cost ... time will tell if that is true or not!



### WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

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#### Acknowledgments

Thanks to all who provided articles – their names are noted with their submissions.

Thanks also to our advertisers.  
Additional ads are welcomed.

#### Submissions

*Windham News & Notes*  
welcomes submissions.

Send articles and signed "letters to the editors" of 100 to 300 words to the address below.  
We prefer emailed submissions.

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# State officials explain windmill approval process

by Imme Maurath, Mary Boyer, and Heath Boyer

On November 15, a public information meeting on the subject of wind energy was held at the Equinox Hotel in Manchester. The meeting was part of a "Citizen Engagement Process" hosted by the Manchester Planning Board and the Orton Foundation with the goal of assisting area residents in their efforts to understand the pros and cons of wind-generated electricity.

Speakers from the Department of Public Service and the Agency of Natural Resources made brief presentations regarding the permitting and approval process for several wind projects in the works for Vermont. These projects include five towers on Equinox Mountain, five in East Haven, additional towers at the Searsburg Plant and, of course, the 27 proposed for Glebe Mountain. Numerous residents of Windham attended.

Dave LaMont, a planner with the Public Service Department, spoke about the economics of electricity in the marketplace and how wind could fit into that picture. He brought a technician's perspective and vocabulary to much of his presentation. He reviewed Vermont's variety of electric generation sources, mentioning that even without wind power, Vermont derives a greater percentage of its electricity from renewable sources than any other state.

He also discussed how independent generating sources, referred to as "merchant" power, bid their output to utilities for distribution. This issue is important because merchant power generators cannot provide their output directly to the communities in which their plants may operate.

John Sayles, from the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), explained the role of ANR in the investigative work pertaining to a specific site application. The focus of their

investigation is to determine if there will be undue adverse environmental impact. The Agency reports on the impact of the development on air and water resources, birds and wildlife, soil erosion and aesthetics.

Mr. Sayles also spoke of the current question before the Environmental Court regarding whether a development in an area like Glebe Mountain, which has an extensive history of permitting under Act 250, should be subject to the oversight processes of both Act 250 and Section 248 of Title 30.

Act 250 has a number of criteria (many of which must be considered by the Section 248 process) that any proposed development must meet as judged by the District Environmental Commission. The District Commissions are not obliged, as is the Public Service Board (PSB), to consider the public good in assessing a proposed project. If a project is found to have an undue adverse effect under the standards of Act 250, it cannot proceed.

Conversely, under Section 248, the PSB may allow a project to proceed in spite of failing to meet these environmental standards if the negative impact is adequately offset by the public good or overall societal benefits of the project.

This jurisdictional question is being raised for the first time in the case of the Glebe Mountain Project, and the decision of the Environmental Court will be watched with interest throughout the state. Historically, in-state generation and transmission projects have been considered only under Section 248.

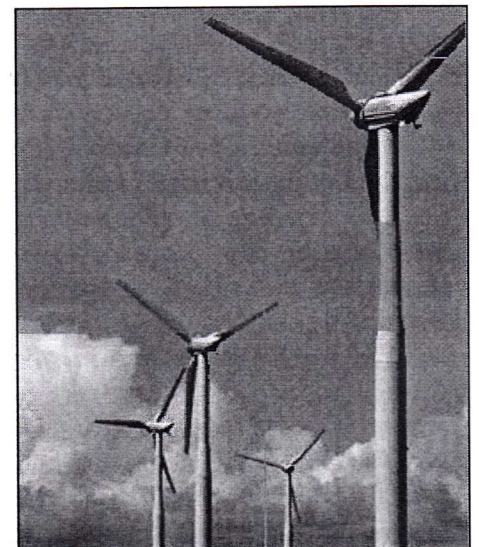
Rob Ide of the Public Service Department explained that the PSB consists of three members appointed by the governor. It is supported, in turn, by a staff of attorneys, policy

analysts, financial analysts, and engineers. The PSB regulates electric power companies, telephone service providers, cable TV providers, pipeline gas companies and some private water companies. In contrast, the Public Service Department represents the public interest in cases before the PSB. The Department is also responsible for long-range utility planning for the state.

Mr. Ide explained that the approval process for an application includes a discovery period, public hearings, site visits and evidentiary hearings. To date, only the East Haven Generating Plant is in the formal application process.

The question and answer period following the presentations indicated the listening public's need for more information and much clarification. Questions ranged from, "What is the state's energy policy?" to why the host town will not receive the direct benefit of lower electricity rates. Many questions pertained to assessing the real economic issues vs. the environmental damage.

It is obvious there are no easy answers.





# Nancy builds capacity of individuals and community

by Mary McCoy

Nancy Dyke still speaks with her principal's lunchroom voice – easily heard, understandable, and full of purpose. If you attended the recent Harvest Supper and Dance, she was the smiling woman who welcomed everyone. Behind the scenes, she helped make sure everything got done.

“A great and admirable skill which Nancy has is her ability to manage people without being pushy. She's the collaborator rather than the dictator.” So says Dave Crittenden, who knows Nancy as a fellow member of the Windham Congregational Church.

Nancy describes herself as a “capacity builder.” She taught grades 2 through 8 before becoming a principal, then moved to the state and regional levels to help enact school reform. She traveled all over Illinois, training others in ways to improve students skills, asking, “How do we do this so kids enjoy it and learn at a faster pace?” The process was creative, and Nancy enjoyed working with teachers to devise plans for students. Even in schools with many at-risk students, she saw reading and math proficiency improve 35 points or more.

These days, Nancy uses her leadership skills as a part of the Windham's Strong Living exercise class, which she co-leads. She also serves as president of the Windham Community Organization, ensuring the success of the group's work for the good of the community. She loves challenge and change, and she admits to being “a bit of a bulldog.” She doesn't give up on anything until she is convinced that she can't do what she wants or sees that it is not her issue.

Her clear sense of purpose wasn't always so. When Nancy graduated from high school in Michigan, she didn't know what she wanted to do.

She worked as a beautician until she married Jerry. They had spent time together since their early teens when she began accompanying Jerry, a tenor soloist, on piano. Four children followed, and it took Nancy nine years to get her undergraduate degree.

Autumn meant back-to-school for Nancy for the next 20 years, so she and Jerry were unable to pursue their desire to visit New England in the fall. When they retired in 2002, they came for color season, and they liked it here so much, they changed their plan to retire in the Midwest. Windham was their favorite area, and by March of 2003, they were settled into their home on Windham Hill Road.

Nancy loves traveling and has made numerous trips to Europe, as well as visits to Russia, China, and even Cuba. Seeing famous sites is not what draws her. She prefers to travel with groups like People to People which arrange for Americans to interact with foreign citizens and dignitaries. “I love to learn about what's going on politically,” she explained.

She learned that people everywhere are congenial and ready to be helpful, an insight she shared in the September-October issue of the *News and Notes*. She also saw that a great number of people in the world are struggling just to survive, some facing hardships we can't imagine. “Traveling has shown me how isolated and inwardly focused Americans are,” she said. “Europeans are much more aware of what's going on in the world.”

Nancy deeply appreciates the diversity of people she has encountered. She said, “Diversity provides a richness of ideas and helps us see all the options available to us. It may be easier in some ways when everyone is homogeneous, but it can also be sterile. I deliberately seek

people whose ideas are different from mine.”

As a child, Nancy sometimes felt like an outsider. Now she views that experience as a valuable lesson. It made her a strong, independent individual and gave her a great appreciation for a sense of community that embraces all.

Like many in Windham, windmills are now on Nancy's mind. “I don't want this to split our town. I want to see us hang together no matter what. We all want to protect our environment, and we all want clean energy for the future. So let's work together.”

As a capacity-builder, Nancy has learned to focus on strengths rather than weaknesses. She sees that it is less productive to try to get what you need, than to let your passions drive you. “In real life when you find something that grabs your energy, you go forward, and old problems become less important and fall away.”

For Nancy, Windham's greatest strength is its sense of community. “I know that from my experiences in other places. There are few communities like we have here. We are a town of independent individuals, but we have a desire to stick together. Let's build on that.”







## Stories foster kids' love for books

by Bev Carmichael

On November 3, the Windham library received a grant from Children's Literacy Foundation, presented by Duncan McDougall, executive director of CLiF. He arrived at the Meeting House with boxes containing 94 new books, arranging them across the front of the stage near the library. Our grant was co-sponsored by The Vermont Country Store.

The children were bused from the school, and after they were greeted, they formed a semi-circle on the floor. Duncan began his storytelling by jumping to the floor on all fours and barking like the dog he was portraying on a bobsled in Alaska. Then at the blink of an eye, he was off to Paris, wobbling on a high wire. He did more than tell a story. He was "Mirette on the High Wire" with both arms spread wide, teetering back and forth, almost falling.

He asked the children how he got to all of these places? After many incorrect guesses by the children, he told them, "By book!" After his interactive story hour, each child was allowed to choose and sign out a brand new book.

As a follow-up assignment, they wrote thank you notes to Duncan and CLiF. Erika Van Alstyne wrote: "Dear Duncan: Thank you for the book. I liked the story you told about the girl on the tight rope."

From Becca Clay: "Dear Windham Library: Thank you for the wonderful time at the library. I had a lot of fun with Duncan because he told us a story when he was in Alaska and he had a bunch of adventures. He went dogsledding and saw a bear. The weird part is, he traveled by book!"

Nikki Ires wrote: "... Duncan explained how when he read books things came alive, and he actually felt he was part of the mystical adventures found in books. I felt he made kids interested in the wonderful world of reading. I felt it was a great experience for my classmates and me. I also feel privileged that I have a library so close to me."

I will be applying for another grant that the Children's Literacy Foundation is offering in the spring of next year. This grant will bring an author of children's books to talk to the students about writing.

## Williamsburg welcomes a Woodruff

by Margaret Woodruff

Your newsletter historian has flown south for the winter trying to keep healthy, this year to Williamsburg, Virginia. While snow was flying up in Vermont, the orange, red, and yellow leaves were still on the trees down here.

It is a lovely spot with beautiful sunsets just a mile away over on the James River. I have a great room, my own bath, and a rocking chair and hassock in a double window overlooking the backyard that has many large trees, birds, and a multitude of large grey squirrels. "Talk about comfort."

While Williamsburg is suburbia, you can travel across the James River by ferry to the County of Surry which is completely different. It still has crops and small towns. I saw my first fields of growing cotton plants. The foliage had turned brown, but each plant sported a large white ball, about the size of a tennis ball of snow white fluffy cotton. I believe they grow soy beans and also corn.

Also down the road from Surry is the town of Smithfield, famous for their smoked hams and other pork products, which they are still producing. I haven't been too far afield, so there is still much more to discover. Certainly a big change for the girl from Windham.

That is all for now, see you next time.

Margaret Woodruff





# Local groups offer antidotes to cabin fever

by Nancy Dyke

The Windham Fire Company and the Windham Community Organization will host community events this winter that will bring residents together for some fun.

Saturday, January 28 will be Bingo Night sponsored by the Fire Company. Doors will open at the Windham Meeting House at 5:30 PM with a light supper of soup, salad and rolls. The cost for this wonderful supper will be \$3.00 a person. Then at

6:00, let the games begin. Each Bingo card will cost \$1.00, and winnings will be based on how many venture out to play.

By popular demand, a Winter Square Dance will be held on Saturday, February 25 at the Meeting House, sponsored by the Windham Community Organization. At 5:30 PM a light supper of soup, salad and rolls will be served, with dancing to begin no later than 6:30. John Newton will

be the caller. Tickets will cost \$5.00 per person to cover the cost of food and musicians.

These events are planned as a result of a survey taken at the 2004 Harvest Supper. Attendees were asked for ideas of activities needed in our community. Many said they would like opportunities to get out of the house and see their neighbors during the winter. We hope you'll come for these evenings with your friends!



Chris Thompson, Skylar Thompson, Jessica Gray, and Laurie Higgins create "golden rings."

## Residents kick off holiday season

by Beverly Carmichael

On the Friday after Thanksgiving, families gathered together to sing Christmas carols and to light the Christmas tree that is in front of Windham's Meeting House. Christine, Nancy and Jerry Dyke along with Ginny and Dave Crittenden led the singing, and it wasn't long before laughter accompanied two turtle doves and five golden rings.

To everyone's delight we sang for an hour, then enjoyed homemade

marshmallows melting in hot chocolate along with Jean Coburn's famous snicker doodles. It was a time to stop, relax, and meet new neighbors and their families.

Then we went outside to light the tree. Snow had been falling all day and added to the beauty of the lights as Jerry Dyke flipped the switch to officially start the Christmas season. The town Christmas tree will be lit every evening until January 1, 2006.

## SEVCA serves those in financial need

by Edith Serke

There are times when we find ourselves in a difficult situation, and we don't know where to turn for help. One source of assistance may be the Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA), serving Windham and Windsor counties since 1965.

SEVCA's mission is to work collaboratively to alleviate hardships, foster self-sufficiency, strengthen our communities, and eliminate the root causes of poverty. SEVCA has a variety of programs and services to meet this end, including Head Start, Weatherization, Emergency Services (e.g. fuel/utility assistance), food, shelter, crisis intervention, parent education, micro-business development, individual development accounts, and four thrift stores.

SEVCA staff provides support and encouragement through the difficult process of negotiating access to various federal and state programs, and they help motivate clients to overcome barriers to self-sufficiency, providing support along the way.

(continued on page 8)



## Teenagers move out, wild animals move in

by Elisabeth Robinson

When children become teenagers, they seem to withdraw somewhat from family life. They develop new friendships and spend more time away from home. With our own daughter, this took the form of moving bedrooms.

What was unthinkable for a 6-year-old became a pressing necessity for a teenager. Privacy prevailed. A bedroom across the hall from our bedroom filled with fluffy toys was vacated for the former chicken loft at the other end of the house, approached by its own staircase.

Two neighbors' cats recently disappeared without trace, one after a frightening altercation at the far side of the house beneath the chicken loft where my teenage daughter was sleeping. That night, needless to add, she moved swiftly back to the nursery bedroom. Fisher cats have been blamed, but I have yet to see one. It is rumored that they live in the Brattleboro area.

Until last summer wild animals

stayed in the woods, and we would occasionally see a deer. My neighbor has now seen a moose drinking from our stream and another moose peered into the window of his livingroom, much to the consternation of his dogs. Bear scat was found on the hill behind our house and during the winter when my son was able to walk up the hill deeper into the woods, he observed large bear paw marks in the wet snow.

New development can have a deleterious effect on wild life, so I wondered if new houses were being built behind us on Chase Road. When my son arrived with his four-wheel drive Jeep, we did a bit of exploring in the area, but not much seemed to have happened since 1986 when we moved here.

We still do not know why the animals seem to be drawing nearer. Wetter summers, warmer winters, more food, less hunting; what could be the cause? Perhaps it is one of nature's mysteries. Or perhaps they too are teenagers, straying from their parents.

## SEVCA serves those in financial need

(continued from page 7)

During the winter months and with the high cost of fuel this year, SEVCA's help is especially important. They provide help with the purchase of oil, kerosene, propane, or wood, depending on your primary source of heat. They also work with the electric companies to prevent disconnection. They will help to negotiate payment plans.

SEVCA staff provide nutrition education, development of healthy low-cost meals, and referrals to local food shelves. SEVCA's Weatherization Program's goals are energy conservation and healthier living conditions for low-income Vermonters who either own their homes or rent. This service is at no cost to residents who meet income guidelines.

Another service is the "Working Wheels" program. Staff will assist people in completing the application for this car loan/repair program offered by the Vermont Development Credit Union. This loan can help you buy a used vehicle or get your car repaired, regardless of your credit history.

Southeastern Vermont Community Action's offices are at 91 Buck Drive, Westminster, VT 05158, telephone: 802-722-4575, or 800-464-9951; the web site is: [www.sevca.org](http://www.sevca.org).

Other offices are in Brattleboro at 87 Frost Street, 802-254-4746, and in Springfield at 10-12 Clinton Street, 802-885-6153.



Have you seen a fisher cat, like the one above? If so, please let us know at the *News and Notes*.





# Sailors go aground in Windham

by Heath Boyer

The conversation usually runs a predictable course. When we meet new acquaintances one of the eventual questions is “Where did you live before you came here?”

Our answer is usually something like, “Well, it’s kind of a long story. . . . We’ve had no fixed address since 1997. That’s the year we left Philadelphia and went sailing.”

In 1996, my wife Mary and I took a break from our respective careers and rented a house for the winter on an isolated part of the coast of Maine. By the end of April as our lease was ending, we had decided to turn our leaves of absence into early retirement.

As we sat over breakfast one morning looking out at the ocean, Mary said, “Well, we’ve got a perfectly good sailboat, why don’t we move aboard and go cruising. You’ve always wanted to do that.” True, it had once been a dream of mine, although after nearly 30 years it had fallen into the category of something I “used to dream of doing.” Suddenly, it seemed like a good idea again.

By August we had sold our pre-revolutionary house in the heart of Philadelphia and given most of its contents to our six married kids. We put into storage a “survival kit” sufficient to furnish a small apartment in case this grand adventure turned out to be a bad idea.

In early October of 1997, we set off down the Chesapeake Bay on a free-form odyssey that would see us over the next seven years and nearly 20,000 miles in the Atlantic, the Caribbean and the Mediterranean. Our first winter aboard was on the Intra-coastal Waterway getting used to our new way of life. As we built experience we got more adventurous.

We sailed to the Caribbean for our second winter aboard. In May,

when the rest of the cruising “fleet” left the Islands for Trinidad (to get below the hurricane belt), we headed toward the Azores, almost 3000 miles to the Northeast and 800 miles off the coast of Portugal. The trip took a full month, and we sat becalmed for days at a time.

Waiting for wind taught us that destinations were not the whole point to sailing. If we were to enjoy ourselves, we would have to be in the present moment. Being out there, with only the boat, the weather, the ocean and each other was the point. Our cycle of watches of six hours on and six hours off put us in harmony with the daily rhythms of the planet and the sky.



From the Azores we went on to the northwest corner of Spain, and then down the coast of Portugal before turning east through the “Pillars of Hercules” and into the Mediterranean. We wintered over the Millennium in Gibraltar, and the next summer we sailed up to Barcelona for a scheduled stay of three weeks. We finally left two years later. During that time, we fell in love with Spain and traveled extensively by train and car throughout Western Europe.

In the summer of 2002, we reversed our course to follow the same southerly route Columbus took to the New World. From the Canary Islands, we “rode” the trade winds to the

Caribbean in just two weeks. Once back across the Atlantic, family duties called us up the U.S. coast to give assistance to Mary’s elderly parents. During the next year, as we helped out at home, and got reconnected to family and life ashore, we realized our long-range cruising days were over. We had accomplished the “Atlantic Circle” and felt we had done enough.

We searched for a home ashore for most of 2004. We had come to know Vermont in the course of visiting a daughter in Northfield, and liked what we had seen. In the last week of November, however, we were still homeless and ready to give up the search for the winter. But there was one more house on the list. We did a “drive by” at the realtor’s suggestion. An hour later, we were standing in the kitchen of 6844 Windham Hill Road and knew within minutes that we were home.

The last question we get in the course of this story is: “Yeah, but why here? Don’t you feel a long way from the water and the sailing life?”

Although it may not have had an ocean coastline for several million years, Vermont has natural beauty in great abundance. These days we find it as soothing and nourishing to look out over meadows, woods and mountains, as we ever did over a seascape.

Vermont also has a lifestyle that demands a certain kind of independence and self-reliance, and it offers a nice balance of solitude and community. Among sailors, nothing is too much trouble if anyone needs help of any kind. We’ve found that same spirit here.

We still hear from “neighbors” who are now in virtually every ocean of the world. When we tell our cruising pals that we have run permanently aground in Vermont and feel right at home, they understand exactly what we mean.





## Landmark apple trees fall in early snow

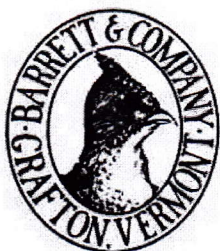
Walter Woodruff remembers going by the apple trees near the Meeting House on Windham Hill Road and seeing many varieties of wildlife eating fallen apples in the early morning. He will miss them, as will many Windham residents, two-legged and four-legged. The trees toppled under the weight of the snow that fell in late October. The Bennetts, on whose property the trees stood, have said they plan to plant some new trees there come spring. It's been mentioned that the town might help, for the loss is all of ours.

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## Windham women walk for cause

In the last issue of the *News and Notes*, we reported on Windham women who walked 60 miles to raise funds to fight breast cancer. It was hard to believe this accomplishment, and some readers assumed the 60 miles were a total of their combined effort. No, each person walked 60 miles. Below is firsthand information about their extraordinary experience. For more information or to register for one of the walks in 2006, go to [www.the3Day.org](http://www.the3Day.org).



*Kristina Koutrakos, Mark Gendein, Donna Koutrakos, and Kelly Fontana – all but Mark are from Windham*

*By Kristina Koutrakos*

According to the American Cancer Society, one in seven American women will develop invasive breast cancer over the course of their lives. If you think of your mother, your sister, your aunt, your grandmothers, your daughter and, depending on your gender, either yourself or your wife, statistics dictate that one of these people is likely to fall prey to this terrible disease.

This October, three of us Windham-ites strapped on our sneakers and walked . . . and walked to help raise money for a cure, for prevention, for hope. We walked 60 miles in three days. We walked with 4,200 other people. And we raised almost \$11 million.

I had done this walk before on my own. The strength of some of the women I had met then inspired and moved me. I met some who had finished chemotherapy only months before and were still out there, with blisters and sore feet, raising as much money as they could for the women who hadn't yet heard the bad news from their doctors.

But this year was better. This year, I walked with my mom.

She trained with Shelly, the family dog, on the dirt roads of Windham (you probably passed her once or twice in your car). I woke up on weekends to her standing over me with my sneakers telling me we were walking to Newfane. My mother, with her grey hair, who was so worried about having the strength and the money needed (there's a \$2,100 fund-raising minimum to participate), not only made it every single mile, she almost doubled her fund-raising minimum.

*by Donna Koutrakos*

I was very impressed with how well organized the event was. The first morning, we arrived and went to our assigned tent to drop off our gear. Then we went to the opening ceremony, with all 4,200 walkers together. We all had badges with bar codes that were scanned as we left the building, and we were given cards with the days route, pit stop locations, and lunch stop.

There were people along the route clapping and cheering us on. If you needed, there were mini vans driving

along for emergency transport. These vans were decorated and had names like "The Mammogram Mobil," "The Itty Bitty Titti Taxi," "Hookers for Hooters," etc.

I've never seen so many porta potties in my life. We were told that if we did not have to use them at every stop, we weren't drinking enough. There was water at each stop, along with snacks and fruit, a medical tent, and buses if you needed a ride. .

When we arrived at the camp, around 5:30 PM, they scanned us in. We went to our designated truck, and our gear was waiting for us. They also gave us our tent for the night. Then we hit the hot showers! After 23 miles that day, those showers were amazing. We ate in a dining tent that was the size of two football fields, and the food was excellent. The second and third days were a repeat of the first.

Closing ceremonies on the last day were very moving. The last group they brought in were the breast cancer survivors, all in pink shirts. We all got down on our knees raising our sneakers up for these amazing women. It was an experience I will never forget.





## WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

P. O. Box 1068

Windham, VT 05359

The WN&N Team welcomes your signed letters and articles (approx 300 words). Send them to the address above or preferably by email to [wnandn@vermontel.net](mailto:wnandn@vermontel.net)

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### GET INVOLVED IN WINDHAM!

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## — *Windham Community Calendar* —

Every Sunday – **Windham Congregational Church** has worship services at 10:00 AM; everyone is invited.

Every Sunday and Thursday – **Valley Bible Church** has services; call the pastor at 874-7287 for times.

Every Wednesday – **Windham Town Library** open at Meeting House from 3:00 to 5:00 PM with reading group on first Weds, knitting group on second and third Weds, and writing group on fourth Weds. All welcomed.

Every Wednesday starting January 11 – **Strong Living maintenance class** at Meeting House at 1:30 PM.

Thursday, January 11 – **Windham Planning Commission** meets at 7:00 PM at Town Office; public is invited.

Wednesday, January 18 – **Senior Brown Bag Chat Group** at 12:30 PM at Meeting House

Thursday, January 24 – **Windham Broadband Project** meets at 7:00 PM at the Town Office.

Wednesday, January 25 – **Windham Community Organization** meets at 7:00 PM. Call Carolyn at 874-4039 to confirm date and location.

Saturday, January 28 – **Bingo Night** with \$3 supper at 5:30 PM at Meeting House, hosted by Fire Co.; bingo cards \$1

Thursday, February 8 – **Windham Planning Commission** meets at 7:00 PM at Town Office; public is invited.

Wednesday, February 15 – **Senior Brown Bag Chat Group** at 12:30 PM at Meeting House

Monday - Friday, February 20 - 24 – **February Vacation** for Windham Elementary School.

Wednesday, February 22 – **Windham Community Organization** meets at 7:00 PM. Call Carolyn Chase at 874-4039 to confirm date and location.

Saturday, February 25 – **Winter Square Dance** and supper at 5:30 PM at Meeting House, hosted by WCO, \$5.00